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# YOSEMITE

OLUME XXXVIII - NUMBER 2

FEBRUARY 1959



1 3 0 1959

-NPS

Yosemite Fall





IN COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE.



-Yosemite Mu

Built originally in 1858, the Upper Hotel was bought by J. M. Hutchings in 1864 and it be known as the Hutchings House. With the addition of a room around the large cedar in bowas also referred to as the Cedar Cottage.

NATURE NOTES

VOSE mite Since 1922, the monthly publication of the National Park Service and the Yosemite Natural History Association in Yosemite National Park.

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OL. XXXVIII

FEBRUARY 1959

NO. 2

#### PRESIDENTIAL VISITS TO YOSEMITE

By Marvin R. Koller, Ranger-Naturalist

#### Part I

The mute testimony that Yosemite utional Park offers scenic wonders most unique in the world, is the reasing numbers of visitors who ss through the entrance stations. ople from all walks of life-from my foreign lands—come to Yomite, attracted by the lodestone of great beauty. The appeal of this rk has reached even to the White use where the first citizens of the id, the Presidents of the United ites, have expressed interest in ning to see for themselves its mite domes, its leaping waterfalls, gigantic trees, its breathtaking enery.

t occurred to me that perhaps you o have been visitors to Yosemite uld like to know some of the des of the trips of our most distinshed visitors, our presidents. eir names, their historical imporce, stand out among the many lions who have come here. All

the details cannot be given since their trips were guarded by special escorts whose purpose was to see to it that the personal safety and privacy of the president was guaranteed.

When most of us come to Yosemite we may travel about freely, untroubled by a host of people following us to catch our every word or gesture. To distinguished personages such as presidents, the price of fame is to be watched and followed by many people. In a democracy wherein a people elect their leader this person becomes, indeed, a man belonging to the people. The very importance of the person occupying the office of President necessitates the cloaking of his movements and the guarding of his person.

Not all the men who visited Yosemite and called "President" actually were President of the United



#### THE SIERRA CLUB

CORDIALLY WELCOMES

#### WARREN G. HARDING

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

MRS. HARDING

AND THE MEMBERS OF

THEIR PARTY

• . •

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

JULY 29 AND 30

1923

President Warren G. Harding was on his deathbed at the tim these invitations to a reception in his honor were being

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—Courtesy of Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery

ived by many important persons. He died only a day's ney away from Yosemite National Park on August 2, 1923. States at the time of their visitation. They may have come before or after their term in office. A study of the records reveals that of a total of eight Presidents who have visited Yosemite, five were not President of the United States at the time of their visits.

A tragic story may be found in the case of President Warren G. Harding. He was to come to Yosemite on July 29 and 30, 1923. Elaborate arrangements had been made and an itinerary planned. The route of travel was carefully studied and men and equipment placed so as to facilitate the orderly movement of the President. Traffic had to be routed away from the presidential party or there would be a tremendous traffic jam and the President would be greatly inconvenienced. The speed of travel was noted and special stops of certain specified time intervals were planned. The comfort and safety of the President is kept constantly in mind by those charged with the responsibilities of the trip. In the case of President Harding, all these arrangements were prepared when death came to the nation's leader in San Francisco. Thus, President Harding died a day's journey away from one of his objectives, Yosemite.

As many of you know, President Abraham Lincoln signed the bill creating the Yosemite Grant in 1864. No man who occupied the nation's highest office came to Yosemite until 1875. The honor of being the first President to come to Yosemite fell to James Garfield. In six short years after his Yosemite visit, James Garfield took office as President. He came to Yosemite, however, as a member of Congress and was known officially as General James Garfield. On that occasion, General Garfield

presided over a meeting which expressed its apologies to James Hutchings who had been evicted from his hotel by the Park Commissioners. The resolution passed by this meeting told Hutchings that Yosemite would always provide shelter for a gentleman who had pioneered so ably in its behalf. Incidentally, James Garfield is buried in my old home town, Cleveland, Ohio, and when I visit there soon I shall view his memorial with a new insight into Garfield's character.

Four more years passed before another President visited Yosemite. This time the great man was a form general and ex-president. The gentleman to whom I am referring was General Ulysses S. Grant who was making a tour of the world a the conclusion of his presidentia General Grant signed Grand Register of the Cosmopolitar House on October 2, 1879. This would make General Grant one o the few Presidents who saw Yosem ite in the fall rather than summer time.

Another four years elapsed and once again another ex-president ar rived for a short visit to Yosemitethis time Rutherford B. Hayes. Presi dent Hayes served in office from 1877 to 1881, the year the tunnel was cut in the world famous Tree" in the Mariposa Grove. It 1883, with a party of twelve, Mr Hayes enjoyed the sights of Yosem ite. He was accommodated at the Sentinel Hotel, which stood for many years on the south bank of the Mer ced River facing Yosemite Falls (There are markers to be found today to the west of Sentinel Bridge which mark this famous hotel's corners.)

This is Part I of a three part series. Part II w appear in the March issue.

#### MANZANITA — A NATIVE CALIFORNIAN

#### By Robert W. Crippin, Ranger-Naturalist

Many interesting features make nanzanita unique among California hrubs. The twisted and curved oranches of red-mahogany color are picturesque, and are beloved by the trist and park visitor alike. The rood is as hard as bone and genrally must be sawed, rather than ut with an ax. The leaves stand up dgewise to the sky in a way that ninimizes their exposure to the rays of the sun, and thus reduces the evacoration of moisture.

It might be said that the manzanita neds its skin like a snake. Naked ems are covered by a paper-thin nd satiny-smooth bark of rich red. s the stems expand in growth this in bark gives way, cracks and eels off in curling flakes, leaving a nder new bark exposed to view. t first the new bark is soft green, ut it is soon burned by the sun into rich mahogany. Immediately after owering the plant generally sends it new foliage and twig growth in illiant colors of crimson and scart. The colored foliage of the new owth is more spectacular than the vely, urn-shaped flowers of white pink.

The manzanita was used extenvely by the California Indians, and e Spanish and early American seters. Only a little less than the acorn the manzanita berry enter into ediet of the Indians. The fruit was ten either raw or cooked; however was generally ground and used as base for cider. Quantites of the rries were packed home by the omen and saved for winter convely

sumption. It has been estimated that an acre of selected manzanita bushes is capable of producing as much solid nourishment as an acre of wheat. The leaves were sometimes used for smoking and from the wood were fashioned pipes, digger sticks, and acorn mush paddles. The leaves were used for a tea to cure colds and to ease the effects of poison oak.

In mission days, when iron was scarce, the hardness of the wood seems to have recommended it as a substitute for nails. Manzanita pegs were used in the building of Mission Dolores at San Francisco.

The white settlers of the West used the berries to make cider, vinegar, brandy, and jelly. Today the branches are popular as decorative pieces, for the making of ming trees, lamp bases, book ends, and pipe bowls. In addition, the wood has been a source of firewood and charcoal.

In many localities the manzanitas are among the first plants to appear in burned-over areas. Some sprout from root crown, while others reestablish by abundant seeding initiated by the heat of the fire. This rapid recovery often prevents erosion. It also offers shade and moisture conservation, enabling the less durable conifers to reseed and return the devastated area to the climax forest in a shorter time.

The members of this genus are evergreen shrubs with crooked branches and smooth, reddish, exfoliated bark. The leaves are entire (rarely toothed), alternate, and more



Mariposa Manzanita.

-Upton, N

or less vertical by the twisting of the petioles; firm or leathery and often similar on both surfaces. The flowers are pinkish or white, jug or urnshaped, five-toothed and borne on terminal cluster or panicle composed of a few or several racemes, and are small and usually nodding. The fruit is a drupe or berry with four to ten seed-like nutlets that may be separable or united into a solid stone.

There are about fifty species of manzanitas distributed in North and Central America, chiefly on the Pacific Coast. Thirty-eight species with several varieties and numerous forms are native to California. Three species are common in Yosemite National Park

The genus name, Arctostaphylos, is derived from the Greek arktos, a bear, and staphule, a grape, in reference to the feeding of bears upon the berry-

like fruits. The Spanish word, ma zanita, refers to the fruit and mean "little apple".

The genus Arctostaphylos is easi recognized, but the classification ar identification of the various form are rather difficult. The Yosemi manzanitas vary in growth-for from prostrate, mat-forming shrul to small trees. Some crown sproafter fires or after cutting, whi others are completely destroyed I fires. The foliage varies from dar glossy green to gray or whitish hue.

The Yosemite species of manzani will be briefly outlined for easy ide tification:

#### Mariposa manzanita

Mariposa manzanita is an erebranched shrub, four to eight  $f\varepsilon$  high, that is common in the Upp

the most common manzanita on e valley floor and on the northern all and talus slopes of Yosemite alley, and is found up to an elevanor of 6000 feet.

The bark is smooth and dark-redsh brown and the branchlets and lorescence are glandular hairy th short stiff hairs. The leaves are arly hairless or bald, with few exptions, and are firm or rigid, oval elliptic, rounded to acute with a ort, soft point at the tip, entire rely toothed), pale grayish-green,

rough in texture and from one-half to one and three quarters inches long and three quarters to one and a quarter inches broad. The petals are usually about one quarter inch long and are usually covered with hairs.

The white or pinkish-white flowers are borne in flat-topped clusters or panicles. The stems of the flower-clusters are glandular and hairy, from one quarter to one third inch long. The red berry is hairy and sticky, scarcely a quarter inch broad, with three solitary and two united nutlets.



-McCrary, NPS

The Yosemite Indians used these berries in making a pleasing ciderlike beverage.

#### Green Manzanita (Arctostaphylos patula)

This shrub is found in the Transition and Canadian Zones, in open forest or on open slopes. It is abundant in open forest on both walls and rims of the valley above 6000 feet; abundant below the north side of Sentinel Dome and the chaparral slope above Union Point; found occasionally on slopes of the north wall down to Columbia Point; rarely on the valley floor, seen only among the boulders behind the Old Village.

The stems of green manzanita are erect, four to six feet high and branched, forming a bushy shrub with rigid, crooked branches. The bark is smooth, bright reddish-brown and not exfoliating, and the branchlets are glabrous.

The leaves are dark green an glabrous, oval to obvicular, obtuse broad at the base, one to two inches long, three quarters to one and three quarters inches broad, and mostly rounded or heart shaped at the base and firm and leathery in texture.

The urn-shaped, deep pink flowers are a quarter inch long and arborne in dense, round terminal cluters, the pedicels being glabrous. The fruit is chestnut brown, globose a depressed, hard to open, and aborone third inch broad. The juice of the fruit is similar to that of green appleand may be used to quench one thirst. They are eaten by mamma as food. The Yosemite Indians use there berries also to make manzani cider. The nutlets are rounded on the back and are nearly smooth.

#### Dwarf Manzanita (Arctostaphylos nevadensis)

This shrub is found in the Canacan and Hudsonian Zones, in ope



-McCrary,

reforest. In Yosemite it is found at vations as low as 4,500 feet but nerally above the valley flor. It be found at Gin Flat, Illilouette 1, Eagle Peak, Glacier Point, buds Rest, along the Pohono Trail, all elsewhere at timber line.

Owarf manzanita is a low, proste, depressed shrub, often forming ough, low thicket over the forest or. The erect branches may atthe height of six or nine inches it may spread out for one or two the bark is reddish-brown and exfoliating.

The leaves are ovate to oblanceolate, commonly narrowly obovate, roundish to acutish at the apex, tipped with a soft point, glabrous or minutely hairy, bright green on both surfaces, and one half to one inch long.

The pinkish flowers are borne in short, simple or few branched racemes and are about one quarter inch long. The flower stalks are glabrous and one-sixteenth of an inch long.

#### MOUNTAIN AND FORESTS SPEAK

The voice of the wind has spoken
In the trees is a sweet refrain.
Laughter in rhythm comes rippling
From a waterfall making its rain.
Blossoms of dogwood are gleaming
In satin white, orange, and green.
Springtime all dressed in her finery,
On top, below, and between.

Should now these majestic mountains
In finery, cut out in pain,
Because of a careless camper
Who had let his fire inflame,
This greatest and beauteous garden,
By leaving an ember to glow.
Their cries would be shaking asunder,
Walls greater than Jericho.

Yet People are treating so lightly
That which is the poets lore,
And for all artists a playground
Of stillness. A sanctified floor,
Where is dwelling the school of nature,
And the noblest of things are wrought,
By those here in meditation,
Who are elevating their thought.
—Alfred E. Brighton

#### 1958 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT IN YOSEMITE

#### By W. J. and Erma Fitzpatrick

The annual Christmas Bird Count taken in and adjacent to Yosemite National Park between El Portal (elevation 2,000 ft.) and Shippey Meadow (elevation 7,000 ft.) and including Yosemite Valley, was conducted on December 30, 1958 under ideal conditions. Clear skies, no wind, and mild temperatures were characteristic. Temperatures ranged from 24° to 65° with snow and ice being encountered only from about 4,000 ft. upwards.

Twenty observers, working in four parties, recorded 60 species and 2.044 individuals. This did not equal the previous year's all-time record of 65 species, but the count was highly successful nevertheless. The average was well above usual, and of unusual interest were the large numbers of Band-tailed Pigeons, Pygmy Owls and Dippers observed. Widespread interest was indicated by the fact that participants came from points as far distant as San Francisco and North Hollywood. The participants were: Mignon Augsbury, Katharine Coakley, Gerald Conley, Lydia Fatzinger, Erma Fitzpatrick, Michael Fitzpatrick, W. J. Fitzpatrick, Zelda Garey, Mrs. Edmond S. Gillette, Jr., Gale Glass, Jane Glass, Bob Grom, Douglass Hubbard, Vergena Koller, Bill Pruner, Ginny Ann Sturm, Mary Lou Sturm, John Townsley, Mary Curry Tresidder, and Sig Zachwieja.

The detailed count follows: Gre Blue Heron, 1; Sharp-shinned Haw 1; Red-tailed Hawk, 2; Golden Eag Sparrow Hawk, 5; Mounta Quail, 1; Band-tailed Pigeon, 35 Mourning Dove, 50; Pygmy Owl, Anna's Hummingbird, 1; Belted Kir fisher, 6: Red-shafted Flicker, Woodpecker, 29; Yello bellied Sapsucker, 3; Hairy Woo pecker, 2; Downy Woodpecker, Woodpecker, 7; Whi Nuttall's Woodpecker, 2; Bla headed Phoebe, 6; Steller's Jay, 86; Scr Jay, 28; Mountain Chickadee, Plain Titmouse, 23; Common Bush 92; White-breasted Nuthatch, 1; Re breasted Nuthatch, 4; Brown Creer, 10; Wren-tit, 5; Dipper, 19; Hou Wren, 1; Winter Wren, 6; Bewic Wren, 3; Canyon Wren, 11; Ro Wren, 1; Robin, 157; Varied Thru 33; Hermit Thrush, 6; Western Bl bird, 35; Townsend's Solitaire, Golden-crowned Kinglet, 180; Ru crowned Kinglet, 111; Cedar W wing, 20; Hutton's Vireo, 1; Au bon's Warbler, 6; House Sparrow, Purple Finch, 8; Cassin's Finch, House Finch, 4; Pine Siskin, Lesser Goldfinch, 23; Rufous-sic Towhee, 59; Brown Towhee, 85; L Sparrow, 100; Rufous-crowned Sp row, 1; Slate-colored Junco, 1; ( gon Junco, 187; White-crowl Sparrow, 7; Golden-crowned St row, 98; Fox Sparrow, 11; Song SI row, 5.

#### YOSEMITE'S KING SNAKES

#### By John D. Cunningham, Ranger-Naturalist

lot uncommonly in the Yosemite ion, mountain king snakes (Lambeltis zonata) are discovered which c red in their dorsal coloration. n when red is present it is frently faded to a light purple, esially in juveniles, and only a se inspection will reveal its prese at all. If such snakes are yed out" by means of a color key would be classified as the Caliia king snake (Lampropeltis getu-Californae). The only sure way to ermine the difference between a k and white mountain king ke and a California king snake is ook at the anterior supralabials, scales on the upper jaw nearest snout. If these scales are black snake is Lampropeltis zonata; if rare light, with or without dark es, the snake is L. getulus. When becomes familiar with the two cies, however, their general aprance and behavior are usually cient to distinguish them. The al king snake most commonly ountered in Yosemite the intain king snake.

uch has been said concerning relationship of king snakes and esnakes. The diet of the king te is actually quite variable, algh they feed upon snakes to a greater extent than most other species. Rattlesnakes are not ignored, if small enough to swallow, but there is no evidence that the king snake makes a special search for them or prefers them to other snakes. King snakes are relatively immune to the bite of a rattlesnake and can survive a dose that would make a human, weighing 300 times as much, seriously ill. If the fangs of the rattler penetrate some vital organ, such as the heart, brain, or lung, the king snake would probably succumb from the effect of the venom.

When capturing a rattlesnake, the king snake usually makes no special attempt to secure the rattler's head. Thus the rattlesnake is frequently free to bite and usually does. Although they will throw body coils around the rattler to secure it during the swallowing process.

When in the presence of king snakes, rattlers react in a very peculiar manner. The central portion of their body is raised, the head and tail anchoring the rattler to the ground, and this loop is brought down upon the king snake like a club. The California king snake is the usual enemy of the rattler, although a few cases are on record of racers (Masticophis spp.) eating small rattlesnakes.

#### REMEMBER WHEN?



-Yosemite Musi

Many early visitors entered Yosemite Valley over the Big Oak Flat Road before portions were destroyed by rock slides. At least one visitor was more impressed by the camera the magnitude of El Capitan!

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